

By Rep. Steve King

Abraham Lincoln once remarked that “nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.” This week, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her liberal colleagues demonstrated once again that in matters where power may conflict with principle, these liberals will put power first every time.

On Monday, I introduced two amendments to H.R. 2847, the Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations Bill. One amendment would have kept the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) out of the 2010 Census, effectively barring taxpayer dollars in the bill provided to the Census Bureau from being disbursed to ACORN. The other amendment would have barred any taxpayer dollars in the bill from being provided to ACORN.

I believe these amendments are of extreme importance to the integrity of the American electoral system. Until last fall, most Americans had never heard of ACORN, but this relatively obscure community organizing group emerged on the national scene in 2008 after registering scores of new voters for Barack Obama and producing more than 400,000 fraudulent voter registration forms nationwide.

ACORN is currently under investigation in 14 states for voter fraud and has frequently paid employees on a commission basis to register voters, a practice illegal in many states. According to an October 2008 article in *The Economist*, during the last election cycle, “in Orlando, home to the Magic Kingdom of Disney, Mickey Mouse tried to register. In Indiana there was an application from a sandwich shop called Jimmy Johns. Authorities in Nevada were surprised to receive voter registration forms from the starting line-up of the Dallas Cowboys.”

All of these fraudulent registrations were later traced back to ACORN. Any reasonable person would conclude that false registration forms almost inevitably lead to fraudulent voting, a felony charge. Because voter fraud is a crime nearly impossible to investigate and prosecute, there is no telling how many fraudulent votes have been cast across America because of ACORN's illegal activities.

ACORN and its estimated 270 corporate affiliates comprise a complex organizational and financial spiderweb with all the appearance of a criminal enterprise. ACORN is facing charges of voter fraud and tax violations, yet it has received over \$53 million in taxpayer funds.

Financial Services Committee Chairman Barney Frank and his liberal friends have opened the taxpayers' wallet to as much as an additional \$8.5 billion that could be accessed by ACORN. The interlocking financial connections between ACORN and its affiliate organizations are ripe with waste, fraud and abuse, yet ACORN has never been investigated because it is protected by its cronies in Congress.

President Obama, a former ACORN employee, has hired ACORN to "partner" with the Census Bureau to complete the 2010 census. Justice demands that Congress cut off ACORN's access to taxpayer dollars and put an immediate end to ACORN's involvement in the 2010 census, but Democrats refuse to allow a vote, let alone cut off ACORN's access to the taxpayer funds.

Late Monday night, Speaker Pelosi used a procedural tactic to pass a gag rule, blocking the amendments I introduced. Pelosi shut off the ability of Republicans to offer amendments. Pelosi would rather silence the minority than have actual debate on issues like ACORN's involvement in the upcoming census or corrupt spending.

The hypocrisy of Pelosi's actions is glaring. In June 2006, then-minority leader Pelosi unveiled a plan entitled "A New Direction for America." Language in the

plan explicitly stated that “Every person in America has a right to have his or her voice heard. No Member of Congress should be silenced on the Floor.” Another direct quote from her plan: “Bills should generally come to the Floor under a procedure that allows open, full, and fair debate consisting of a full amendment process that grants the Minority the right to offer its alternatives.”

This Pelosi Congress is violating its 2006 commitments to the American people so it can protect ACORN and suppress the voice of the minority party. Shielding ACORN from oversight ensures that this liberal get-out-the-vote machine will continue its shady practices.

It is time for every member of this Congress to go on record in support of or opposition to ACORN. ACORN is corroding the integrity of our electoral process by attacking the sanctity of the ballot box and using taxpayer dollars to do so, and Nancy Pelosi and Democrats on Capitol Hill are complicit in ACORN’s cover-up. America cannot allow the same group that produced more than 400,000 fraudulent voter registration forms to run the 2010 census.

Rep. King was elected to Iowa's 5th District in 2002. He sits on the House Judiciary Committee and its Constitution and Immigration subcommittees.